

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00

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O R 012306Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6569

INFO PANCANAL

USCINCSO

UNCLAS PANAMA 0751

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PN PFOR

SUBJECT: TACK COMMENTS ON THE CANAL TREATY NEGOTIATIONS

1. MINISTER-NEGOTIATOR JUAN ANTONIO TACK HAS PUBLICLY DENIED THAT HIGHLY OPTIMISTIC ACAN-EFE PRESS REPORTS CONCERNING THE CANAL TREATY NEGOTIATIONS ORIGINATED WITH PANAMANIAN GOVERNMENT SOURCES. HIS DENIAL WAS PUBLISHED ON THE FRONT PAGES OF LA ESTRELLA AND MATUTINO, SATURDAY, JANUARY 31. EMBASSY'S INFORMAL TRANSLATION OF THE TEXT OF THE MATUTINO ARTICLE FOLLOWS.

2. QUOTE: "PANAMANIAN CHANCELLOR JUAN ANTONIO TACK, IN RESPONSE TO A JOURNALIST'S QUESTION CONCERNING A LONG PRESS DISPATCH CONCERNING THE CANAL TREATY NEGOTIATIONS THAT WAS TRANSMITTED FROM WASHINGTON BY THE AGENCY ACAN-EFE, SAID TODAY THAT THE MENTIONED DISPATCH IS OBVIOUSLY A STRICTLY JOURNALISTIC INFORMATION THAT HAS NO ORIGIN IN ANY OFFICIAL SOURCE OF THE REPUBLIC OF PANAMA.

ALSO, MINISTER TACK REITERATED HIS CONVICTION THAT IN THE MOST RECENT ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE REPRESENTATIVES

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OF BOTH COUNTRIES, SOME PROGRESS WAS ACHIEVED IN THE CONSIDERATION

OF SOME PRINCIPAL SUBJECTS OF THE NEGOTIATIONS, AMONG WHICH HE MENTIONED AS EXAMPLES, DURATION OF THE NEW TREATY, USE RIGHTS FOR LANDS AND WATERS FOR THE FUNCTIONING OF THE INTER-OCEANIC WATERWAY, AND THE THEMES OF PERMANENT NEUTRALITY AND ARBITRATION, AS WELL AS OTHER RELATED MATTERS.

MINISTER TACK, WHO NOW IS PRESENTLY DEDICATING HIS TIME EXCLUSIVELY TO THE NEGOTIATIONS FOR A NEW TREATY CONCERNING THE CANAL AND ITS ADJACENT ZONE PRESENTLY UNDER NORTH AMERICAN JURISDICTION, CONCLUDED THAT BOTH SIDES ARE MAKING THE NECESSARY STEPS TO MAKE TECHNICAL ADJUSTMENTS IN PREPARATION FOR A NEW MEETING OF THE NEGOTIATING TEAMS OF THE UNITED STATES AND PANAMA AS SOON AS POSSIBLE". END QUOTE.

COMMENT: THIS COMMENT BY PANAMA'S CHIEF NEGOTIATOR SHOULD MAKE CLEAR THAT PROGRESS, NOT AGREEMENT, ON THE SUBJECTS OF DURATION AND LANDS AND WATERS WAS ACHIEVED DURING THE MOST RECENT NEGOTIATING ROUNDS. THE ACAN-EFE ARTICLE HAD ERRONEOUSLY CONVEYED THE IMPRESSION TO THE PANAMANIAN PUBLIC THAT CONCEPTUAL AGREEMENT HAD BEEN REACHED ON THESE ISSUES. END COMMENT.  
JORDEN

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